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593 alluded to or occur in the presence of either his father or mother. To appear unclothed in each other's presence would be embarass- [291] ing to father and son alike. A woman refrained from any conversation or action that would call the attention of her father to the fact that she was menstruating or pregnant. An example of the [845] attitude in this regard came to attention recently. "A woman, who was walking along the road near her house one evening, suffered a miscarriage. Instead of being taken to her own house nearby she insisted on being taken to a neighbor's, her reason being that her father and a few of his friends had been at her home when she had left and she would be 'ashamed' to appear in front of him in her condition."

It would seem that in some ways mothers had closer ties with their daughters and fathers with their sons. If, for example, parents disagreed about something their children did, each took up for the child of like sex. A man said to his wife: "You leave the boy alone, he's *my* boy," and a woman would say the same regarding the daughter. Or had a child done something to disgrace the parents, the wife was likely to upbraid her husband, if a boy were the culprit, by telling him: "Your son did so-and-so!" Should [597] the daughter have been at fault, her father would speak in similar vein to his wife. In cases of adoption, too, a woman claimed a girl and a man, a boy.

On the other hand, in circumstances where parents could publicly show pride in their children, it often happened that a woman gave presents away in honor of her son and a man in honor of his daughter. It was customary, too, that if a young man had done something especially noteworthy at war, anyone could approach his mother and ask for whatever was wanted, and she would give it. Middle-aged women, whose sons were in World War II, joked with each other along these lines when news of their sons came from the front. Unfortunately, however, adverse economic circumstances precluded the full carrying out of the custom.

● 604 601 Attitudes of respect and reserve between parents and children are extended to include all of parents' siblings and their spouses, special emphasis being put on father's sister and mother's brother. Kinship terms reflect this situation. The term "father" includes father's brother, male cousin, mother's sister's husband; "mo-

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ther" includes mother's sister, female cousin, father's brother's wife. This was neatly illustrated in an instance given by Mary Ereaux. "My mother's cousin's husband came to my house a few weeks ago and wanted to ask me something about arrangements for the pop concession at the Fair. It was a matter of serious business and he and I stood, each looking in a different direction, talking only about the matter in hand. After he had left, my son-in-law, who is not an Indian, and who does not understand the Gros Ventre language, said: 'Mother, you looked as though you were mad at that man.' So I told him: 'In the Indian way, that man would be the same as my father, because his wife would be in the same relation to me as my mother, so we never talk unless necessary and never look at each other while talking.'"

The term "aunt" is reserved for father's sister and female cousins, and "uncle" for mother's brother and male cousins. Here, too, heightened reserve characterized the cross-sex relationship. "A man would not address his 'aunt' directly unless by chance she would be the only one there and he needed information. He would under no circumstances linger to make conversation with her. The same for a woman and her 'uncle.'"

Parents-in-law

The respect between members of the opposite sex who are of contiguous generations was most apparent in the avoidance between mother-in-law and son-in-law. This required that the two neither look at nor speak to each other at any time. It was stated that some men disregarded these rules after the death of the wife, "but most used to keep them all the time." There was one case mentioned in which the son-in-law of a very old woman told his wife: "Your mother is getting very old now. We won't see each other much longer anyway. It would be all right for your mother to come in to our lodge." Both Coming Daylight and Singer insisted nevertheless that, should such a proposal be made, the son-in-law would be the one to make the initiative, never the mother-in-law.

The avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law was almost as strictly observed, in that a woman could not look directly at her father-in-law when she spoke to him, and she did not

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have someone come back a real hero, and, although such a promise to torture oneself could be made in regard to other relatives, "it was usually a sister who thought so much of her brother who did that." Other forms of sacrifice which a girl might practice on her brother's behalf would be to take a fine robe, or something else of value, and stick it on top of the lodge saying: "I offer this that my brother may come back with good luck, bringing something fine from war." This could be even more specific in that a girl could offer, say, the tip of her finger, if her brother would bring back a particular thing, such as a scalp or a horse or a weapon. Again, should her brother be ill or wounded, a woman would be exceedingly concerned and might go so far, as in one case recorded, of promising that if he should recover she would join the Women's Lodge—"which was considered a great thing to do for your brother."

Usually a man would have some voice in regard to his sister's marriage and, if he were the one who made the arrangements, he received the larger share of the bride-price. It was said, too, that a brother would be especially concerned regarding his younger sister's moral conduct and might take it upon himself to keep her in line. Although parents would feel the disgrace of an erring daughter, a brother was expected to react violently. If her husband failed to punish his wife for adultery, her brother could kill her. Some instances were given, too, in which the man took his own life indirectly, by riding into the midst of the enemy without taking any precautions, because he felt so keenly the dishonor his sister who was unfaithful had imposed on him.

Maternal Uncle and Paternal Aunt

"Because a brother and a sister thought so much of each other, they were expected to be good to each other's children." If a woman had several brothers, it was the eldest who assumed the duties of the maternal uncle and his relationship with his nephews was a direct one. Should the eldest brother be unable to undertake the responsibility another brother or male cousin was expected to do so.

The maternal uncle was supposed to watch his sister's children closely even though her husband was on the scene. If he did not

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604 861 approve of the way they were being raised, he could remove a sister's son from the parental home and keep him. The parents would have to let him go. Thick told of his own experience in this regard. One day at the time when he was nine or ten years old, his mother's brother came and told his brother-in-law: "I am taking my nephew. You folks are not training him to be a man." So his uncle took Thick away and raised him very strictly. He was made to work very hard and his uncle did not hesitate to lecture him and to administer severe tongue-lashings. His uncle's wife would occasionally intervene in the attempt to bring about a more lenient attitude toward the boy, especially as Thick got older, but all to no avail. Finally, when Thick had become a young man, he could not stand it any longer and rebelled. He has never forgotten that after all those years of what amounted practically to servitude, his uncle did not give him a single horse nor any other presents, although he showered Thick's elder brother with good things, especially with horses.

604 In case the maternal uncle was well-off, and his sister and her husband in bad straits, the uncle was more or less obliged to take the responsibility for his nephew. If he did not do so, people would say he had neglected his duty. Furthermore, if a boy were [855] lazy and consistently refused to obey his own father, he might be ejected from his home, and it would be up to his maternal uncle to take him in. One case was cited, too, of a boy who was neglected by his parents, and whose uncle not only took him in, but acted as though he thought more of his nephew than he did of his own sons.

Whether or not the maternal uncle insisted on taking full charge, he had the right of disciplining his nephew, reprimanding him when he failed to measure up, but at the same time he had the obligation of protecting and shielding him in public. While a father could, and sometimes did, disown his son, the boy could be sure of a refuge with his mother's brother, although he faced severe punishment in private at his uncle's hands. Thus a young man who was in difficulties, over say a love affair, would seek out his uncle. Should he be threatened by a husband who suspected the young man of fooling around his wife, the uncle could be counted upon to invite the irate husband, smooth over the situation, and in

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case of necessity pay the indemnity. Other people might say to a man that it was of no use to help that nephew, that he was no good. Yet the uncle did not give up trying to save face for the nephew, and to do his best to shield or rehabilitate him—but at the same time he "talked turkey to him." 604●

Even after a man was married, his maternal uncle had the right of disciplining him. If a husband mistreated his wife undeservedly it was said that his maternal uncle could step in and take the wife temporarily away from his nephew, letting him shift for himself, doing his own cooking and so on, "until he came to his senses." A man would have to take such treatment from his uncle, it was said, because public opinion condemned the husband and backed up the uncle, who was considered within his rights. [684] [626]

Furthermore the maternal uncle would feel duty-bound to protect his nephew from danger. An extreme case was cited in illustration. "A Gros Ventre boy was captured by the Crow when fairly young and he remained among them after he grew up although he could have returned. On one occasion the Gros Ventres surrounded a war party of Crow among whom was this young Gros Ventre man. The young man appealed to his mother's brother to save his life, and the uncle responded by using every argument he could think of. The other Gros Ventres in the party refused the plea, however, on the grounds that the boy had previously had the opportunity to return to his own people, and asked: 'Why didn't he think of his uncle then?'"

On the other side of the picture, if a young man were successful and "on the way up," as the saying goes, his maternal uncle had priority over the boy's father or older brother in helping him by giving generously to him in private and by giving away publicly in his honor as lavishly as possible. It was stated, for instance, that if a young man was ready to go to war, his uncle might go to him and give him a horse, encouraging him to face the enemy bravely and to show courage under fire. He would tell his nephew: "I'm going to watch you. Here is your chance to show what you can do." Thus he might "steal the show" from a father or older brother who themselves might have intended to help the boy off to a good start. Because it was the uncle who did this, nothing would be said. All his relatives would be proud of a successful young [431]

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604 man, but his maternal uncle would be given the greatest amount of credit for his nephew's prowess, and he would rejoice more than the others in his nephew's successes.

426 604 A nephew could, if he wished, use his uncle's property without asking permission. If he damaged the property so borrowed, however, the uncle might reprimand him severely. Sometimes an uncle took the initiative and told one of his nephews: "All that I have is yours." In such a case, not only would the nephew be free to use the property without asking, but even if it were damaged—say a borrowed horse was carelessly injured or lost,—nothing would be said by the uncle nor any punishment inflicted. A nephew was supposed to be very respectful toward his uncle, but was freer with him than he could be with his own father. He could, for instance, joke with his uncle about being a lady's man, but he could not go too far in referring to sexual matters. He would not feel quite so embarrassed if his uncle should happen to see him unclothed, as would be the case with his father or his brother-in-law, but he would be far from comfortable in that situation.

[834] [291]

604 The relationship between a man and his sister's daughter was not as direct as that between him and his sister's son. If a woman died, leaving orphan girls, it was not unusual that the wife of her brother would say: "I am going to take these girls so that I can have a son-in-law through them." This is what happened to Coming Daylight and her sister, whose maternal uncle took responsibility for them, although they were actually trained by his mother. It was he who arranged their marriages and it was to him they returned when widowed or divorced. His sons took the place of brothers to these two orphans.

While he did not take on the role of disciplinarian to his sister's daughters, whether or not their parents were living, the maternal uncle was expected to be generous to his nieces and to show his regard by giving things away in their honor. If a maternal uncle asked a niece for anything she possessed, she was supposed to give it to him without question, even though at considerable cost to herself. "Coming Daylight was asked by her uncle for the elk teeth she owned, to exchange with a Crow who had offered him an excellent race horse in return. She gave up these valuables without a word, though she hated to part with them since she did not know

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at the time whether she would ever have a chance to acquire more of these highly desirable decorations." On the other hand, a maternal uncle would not refuse his niece or her husband anything it was in his power to give, and would always lend them horses or other kinds of property when requested. 604

Compared with the responsibilities of the maternal uncle, a paternal aunt had relatively few obligations to her nephews and nieces but correspondingly more to their mother, her brother's wife. Nevertheless it was she who took particular interest in her brother's children when they were infants. She showed regard for her brother by providing, if possible, the sack for the newborn baby and the goods to pay the medicine man in case it were necessary to call one to the child-bed of her sister-in-law. If the child became ill she, too, usually paid for the necessary doctoring and it was not unusual for her and her husband to assume the expense of a formal naming feast for the infant. [854] [553]

The paternal aunt had the duty of "bawling out" her brother's daughters if they misbehaved. In regard to property, a niece would have to ask permission before using anything of her aunt, but the request was always granted. The aunt would tell her niece in an offhand way: "Well, why don't you go get it!". Whereas if someone not in that relationship had made the request, she would have gotten the object and handed it to her. A woman was expected to be as reserved with her aunt as she would be with her own mother and with her mother-in-law. A man was even more respectful to his aunt in the sense that he would not speak to her unnecessarily nor look directly at her. [861]

When a girl married, the paternal aunt sometimes participated in the bride-price, and claimed her niece's husband as "son-in-law." According to Carter Snake: "When Otter Robe's oldest sister married, the groom gave three horses, one of which went to the bride's father, one to her brother, and the third to her father's sister. The latter made for her niece's husband a fine fancy robe, treating him with the same consideration she would have accorded her own daughter's husband. Then, when this 'son-in-law' returned successfully from a raiding party, he gave his 'mother-in-law' one of the horses he had captured." It is interesting to note [583]

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604 that the wife of a maternal uncle may likewise claim his nephew as "son-in-law."[2]

Brothers-in-law and Sisters-in-law

607 The mutual regard between brother and sister is said to have been reflected not only through the carrying out of the obligations of the avunculate and amitate in the spirit of "showing how much brothers and sisters thought of each other." It could also be seen in the type of behavior expected between brothers-in-law on the one hand, and sisters-in-law on the other. Brothers-in-law were generous to each other and could joke lightly with each other, but nothing even remotely connected with sex could be so much as mentioned in each other's presence. A man was circumspect in regard to his sister's husband out of respect for his sister, and to his wife's brother because the latter, out of respect for his own sister, had similar obligations toward him. Sisters-in-law behaved toward each other in like fashion. These attitudes were extended to include wife's brother's wife as "sister," rather than "sister-in-law," and husband's sister's husband as "brother."

Unmarried brothers of a man and wife likewise regarded themselves as brothers-in-law. A case which well illustrates the attitudes between them is the following as told by The Boy. "My older brother was married to Thick's older sister and we two young unmarried brothers-in-law experienced a most embarrassing situation. One of us was visiting a woman at night and the other came to the same woman, not realizing in the dark that his brother-in-law was already there. We recognized each other's voices, however, and the one who arrived last beat a hasty retreat. The matter has never, even to this day, been discussed nor so much as indirectly alluded to between us, and the embarrassment over this event led us to avoid each other for a considerable time thereafter. Eventually our relationship was deepened inasmuch as Thick married my sister. Even though my sister should die, Thick and I would continue to be brothers-in-law on the same plane."

[2] Kroeber, 1902, p. 10, calls attention to the identity of terms for "niece" and "daughter-in-law." Apparently a woman used the term "son-in-law" for her niece's husband or for her husband's nephew only if presents were given.